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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**JOHNSON COUNTY RESIDENT INDICTED FOR TRANSPORTING
CHILD PORNOGRAPHY OVER THE INTERNET**

SAVANNAH, GA: Lisa Godbey Wood, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, announced today that on October 13, 2006, a federal grand jury sitting in Savannah returned a 76-count indictment against Gary F. Pernell, age 54, a resident of Kite, Georgia. Pernell was arrested on a bench warrant and had an initial appearance before United States Magistrate Judge W. Leon Barfield. The indictment, unsealed at the initial appearance, charges Pernell with one count of possession of child pornography and 75 counts of transporting or shipping child pornography in interstate commerce. Pernell remains in custody pending a detention hearing presently scheduled for October 23, 2006.

If convicted, Pernell faces a maximum sentence of not more than ten (10) years imprisonment on the possession of child pornography charge and imprisonment for not less than five (5) years and not more than twenty (20) years on each of the transporting child pornography charges. In addition, Pernell would be subject to a fine of up to \$250,000 and a \$100 special assessment on each count. Furthermore, each charge permits a court to impose life-time supervised release.

Ms. Wood stressed that an indictment is only an accusation, and it is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is entitled to a fair trial, during which it will be the Government's burden to prove his guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

This case is being brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov/.

The case was investigated by Special Agents Jeremi D. Blankley and Thomas West from the Savannah office of Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, with assistance from Special Agent John Durden of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and the Johnson County Sheriff's Office. The United States is represented by Assistant United States Attorney Stephen K. Marsh.

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